

Joshua Tree National Park

Wildflower Report



Updated February 13, 2015

In spring, Joshua Tree National Park comes alive with wildflowers. Exactly where and when the blooms will occur, though, is difficult to predict in advance. Some years, the flowers seem few and far between; in other years, the desert sands are carpeted with color. Regular, soaking rains in the winter months contribute to great wildflower displays.

Weekly wildflower reports are posted on the park website,
<http://www.nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/blooms.htm>,
throughout the peak season (typically mid-February through early May).

Cottonwood Canyon
Mile Marker 33
Cottonwood Springs Rd.



The chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) bushes are starting to show their best. Also look for the yellow flowers on bladderpod bushes (*Isomera arborea*). Other flowers observed in the area, are desert globe mallow (*Spheralcia ambigua*), rock-pea (*Lotus rigida*). The dominant smell is from the desert mistletoe flowers (*Phoradendron californicum*).

Smoke Tree Wash
Pinto Basin Road



A Bush Peppergrass (*Lepidium fremontii*) in full bloom near Smoke Tree Wash. Such an isolated plant offers mercy to desperate nectar feeders. Also in the Smoke Tree

Wash area, desert globe-mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod bush (*Cleome isomeris*), and desert star-vine (*Brandegea bigelovii*) are blooming.

Ocotillo Patch



Very few of the ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) are blooming along Pinto Basin Road's Ocotillo Patch. The few branch-tips in bloom are guarded by hummingbirds. Other flowers in the area are bladderpod bush (*Cleome isomeris*).

Wilson Canyon



Desert globe-mallow (*Sphaeracea ambigua*), along with the first brittle-bush (*Encelia farinosa*), and desert star-vine (*Brandegea bigelovii*) are blooming. However, bladderpod bushes (*Cleome isomeris*) are the dominant blossoms in the canyon.

Porcupine Wash



Desert star-vine (*Brandegea bigelovii*) flowers are tiny but beautiful. These cucumber relatives sprawl close to the ground, and sometimes up the branches of nearby shrubs. Creosote bush (*Larrea tridentate*), and desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*) are beginning to bloom as well.

Let Them Grow

Leave wildflowers undisturbed for others to enjoy. Joshua Tree was first established as a national monument in 1936 to protect desert vegetation that was being carried away and planted in Los Angeles gardens. Today, help us continue in our mission "to preserve unimpaired" the beautiful plants of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts: don't pick wildflowers.
